

British colonialization: Origin of the racial conflict in Sri Lanka (1796-1947)

A.R.M. Imtiyaz

Department of History,  
Nanjing University, People's Republic of China.

Conflicts between different ethnic groups are severe political problems in the south Asian contemporary political scene. Sri Lanka's conflict between the Sinhalese dominated government and Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) is one of the examples. Though it may seem that the conflict will come to an end due to the ongoing cease fire agreement, it is still worthy of discussing how the conflict originated historically in order to find a proper solution of all disputes and to get a better understanding of both sides.

The conflict situation of Sri Lanka did not appear overnight. It has its own roots. Historians had mapped out different theories to identify the cause of the problem, but no theory correctly attempted to emphasize the role of British colonialization on the conflict. In the author's eye, the responsibility of British colonial rule, which promoted one side's dominance over the other, should not be underestimated. The colonial policies had largely misguided local people of different ethnicities to distrust each other, and eventually paved the way to separate them into permanent enemies.

This paper is therefore, by analyzing the process (pre-independent era) of the formation of the unitary structure, attempts to identify the roots of the ethnic conflict of Sri Lanka known to all today.

Key words: British colonialization; Ethnic conflicts; Political problems;  
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